

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members: Governor's Task Force on Information Technology In Health Care

FROM: Governor.Ehealth

SUBJECT: Weekly Communiqué

DATE: July 21, 2005

COMMUNICATON BULLETIN

To facilitate the sharing of information with fellow Task Force members, please utilize the email at governor.ehealth@vdh.virginia.gov. This email is monitored daily and can also accommodate special communication requests.

Web site update: VITA staff have certainly "risen to the vision" by creating a public use web site to notify and archive the activities of the Governor's Task Force on Information Technology in Health Care. Features include:

- The Governor's Executive Directive 6 which contains the mission of the Task Force
- The Task Force membership
- Proposed Study Plan
- Minutes of full Task Force meetings and Subcommittee meetings
- Glossary of relevant e-health terms
- Weekly communiqués
- Links to related web-sites

The web site is currently being tested and should be available to the members and the public next week.

An important feature, that will be an additional upgrade, is the registration component. This will allow the Task Force to maintain a record of interested parties.

FEDERAL LEGISLATION

There are currently ten federal bills addressing various aspects of health information technology. The following web site provides a side-by-side comparison of these various bills: <http://www.ehealthinitiative.org/>

Although most bills call for the establishment of grants to provide upfront funding for various projects, there is also a bill (HR 747) that calls for additional Medicare payment incentives and a bill (S 16) that calls for federal loan guarantees for HIT adoption and data sharing.

Another useful we-site is found at

<http://www.ehs.gov/spg/HHS/PSC/DAM/Reference%2DNumber%2DONCHIT%2D3/Attachments.html>

This web site contains all information related to the federal RFP issued by the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information for developing a prototype for nationwide health information network architecture. This RFP requires the vendor to develop, create prototypes for, and evaluate a nationwide health information network architecture for support of widespread health information exchange that can be used to test specialized network functions, security protections and monitoring, and to demonstrate the feasibility of nationally scalable models. The RFP is evaluative in nature as the federal government is trying to understand the degree to which its feasible to have an expectation for a national exchange versus a set of regional exchanges and to understand how to evaluate some more heterogeneous form where there is a network of networks or regional areas and then national cross regional areas.

INTEROPERABILITY

Within healthcare, standard protocols that support communication between applications are often referred to as messaging standards, also called interoperability standards or data exchange standards. Messaging standards provide the tools to map proprietary formats to one another and more easily accomplish exchange of data. Some of the standards development organizations also are incorporating semantic interoperability in their standards. This means that they are making accommodations for embedding standard vocabularies as well as standard syntax in their messages.

However, because the standard protocols developed to date have often had a lot of optionality, full interoperability has not always been possible. When this occurs, or when a vendor does not use a standard protocol in its application development, an interface must be written to achieve interoperability between the two applications.